

§ 963.13 Subpoenas and witness fees not authorized.

The Postal Service is not authorized to issue subpoenas requiring the attendance or testimony of witnesses, nor to pay fees and expenses for a petitioner's witnesses or for depositions requested by a petitioner.

§ 963.14 Discovery.

Discovery is to be conducted on a voluntary basis to the extent possible. The presiding officer may, upon application of either party, order such discovery as he or she deems reasonable and necessary. Discovery may include one or more of the following: production of documents, requests for admissions, interrogatories, depositions, and witness lists. The presiding officer will establish the terms upon which requested discovery will be allowed.

[52 FR 18912, May 20, 1987, as amended at 62 FR 4459, Jan. 30, 1997]

§ 963.15 Evidence.

(a) In general, admissibility will hinge on relevancy and materiality. However, relevant evidence may be excluded if its probative value is substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice, or by considerations of undue delay, waste of time, or needless presentation of cumulative evidence.

(b) Testimony shall be given under oath or affirmation and witnesses are subject to cross-examination.

(c) Agreed statements of fact are encouraged and may be received in evidence.

§ 963.16 Transcript.

Testimony and argument at hearings shall be reported verbatim, unless the presiding officer otherwise orders. Transcripts or copies of the proceedings are supplied to the parties at such rate as may be fixed by contract between the reporter and Postal Service. Any party desiring a copy of the transcript shall order it from the contract reporter in a timely manner to avoid delay in filing briefs.

§ 963.17 Proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.

(a) Each party who participates in the hearing may, unless the presiding

officer orders otherwise, submit proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, orders, and supporting reasons, either in writing or orally at the discretion of the presiding officer. Unless given orally, the date set for filing of proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, orders, and supporting reasons shall be within 15 days after the delivery of the official transcript to the Recorder, who shall notify both parties of the date of its receipt. The filing date for proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, orders, and supporting reasons shall be the same for both parties. If not submitted by such date, unless extension of time for the filing thereof is granted, they will not be included in the record or given consideration.

(b) Except when presented orally before the close of the hearing, proposed findings of fact shall be set forth in serially numbered paragraphs and shall state with particularity all evidentiary facts in the record with appropriate citations to the transcript or exhibits supporting the proposed findings. Each proposed conclusion shall be stated separately.

[52 FR 18912, May 20, 1987; 52 FR 20599, June 2, 1987]

§ 963.18 Initial decision.

Unless given orally at the conclusion of the hearing, the presiding officer shall render an initial decision as expeditiously as practicable following the conclusion of the hearing and the receipt of the proposed findings and conclusions, if any. The initial decision becomes the final agency decision if a timely appeal is not taken.

§ 963.19 Appeal.

Either party may file exceptions in a brief on appeal to the Judicial Officer within 15 days after receipt of the initial or tentative decision unless additional time is granted. A reply brief may be filed within 15 days after the receipt of the appeal brief by the opposing party. The Judicial Officer has all powers of a presiding officer and is authorized to decide all issues de novo.

§ 963.20 Final agency decision.

The Judicial Officer, or by delegation the Associate Judicial Officer, renders